

THE
VACATION;
OR THE
FOUR COUSINS.



NEW HAVEN.
STENNEY BABCOCK.

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VACATION;
OR THE
FOUR COUSINS.



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## THE VACATION.



Early one fine spring morning, little George and Mary Somers began to get ready to visit their cousins Jane and James Morton. They were to have two weeks vacation, and our young friends resolved it should be a joyful time.

Mary was a quiet, thoughtful child, and she busied herself in packing up such things as she would need during her visit; but George was almost beside himself with joy, and capered about the house, calling on all the servants to assist him in getting ready.

## THE VACATION

At last the carriage drove up to the door. Mr. and Mrs. Somers seated themselves in it, George mounted his beautiful poney, the servant boy Jim got up behind the carriage, the driver cracked his whip, and off the little party started for the country.

For the first two or three hours the children were delighted with their ride; the morning was delightful, and the smiling fields, the green trees, the blue sky, and the bright sunshine, raised their spirits to the highest pitch of joy and gladness.

By noon, however, they began to be tired of riding, and a few yawns from Mary reminded Mr. Somers that it

## THE VACATION.

was time for the party to rest awhile and to take dinner.

There being but very few houses on this road, a large shady oak tree was selected, and the family seated themselves on the green grass to rest till dinner was ready.

The coachman having unharnessed the horses, so that they might rest also, he and Jim spread a table-cloth on the green grass, and took a basket of provisions out of the carriage-box, which they placed on the cloth. When all things were made ready, the children and their parents seated themselves to dine.

When they had finished their meal, and the servants had taken theirs too, the hor-

# THE DINNER.





ses were harnessed, and they proceeded on their journey.

They had gone but a few miles farther, when they saw on one side of the road, at a little distance from them, the woods on fire! This was a grand sight! The flames ran up to the tops of the tallest trees, and leaped from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, as swift as thought.

The children were a little frightened at first; but finding the fire to be some distance from them, and the wind driving it still farther, they soon got over their fears. Then they began to cry *fire! fire!* and Jim joining them with all his might, the three made the woods ring with their shouts.

○ THE WOODS ON FIRE.



At last a turn in the road hid them from the fire, and the trees on each side being high, they saw it no more.

For some time, then, they rode along in silence. The sun was sinking in the west, and the day was drawing towards its close, when Mrs. Somers pointed out to the children the house of their aunt Morton. Mary was just beginning to nod, but she now started up wide awake, while George, cantering his poney ahead of the carriage, led the way directly up to the door.

James and Jane, with their mother, came out to receive their friends, and in a very few moments the four cousins were ~~all~~ in hands and ask

ing and answering questions as fast as they could talk.

It was a joyful meeting, for the cousins had not seen one another before in two years ; they sat a long time talking over the rambles they had taken when George and Mary were there before.

The next day James and Jane went with their cousins to the favorite swing, which was in the shade of some oak trees growing at a short distance from the house. Well did the little visitors remember the spot, for they had spent many a pleasant hour there during their former stay at aunt Morton's. The swing was of a kind not often seen. A large grape vine ran up the



trunk of a tree and over its branches ; then dropping to the ground, it had been raised a little and made to twine itself around the branches of another tree. When the vine had grown large and strong, it formed a safe and pleasant swing. Here, seated on the swing by turns, the cousins spent a part of every day during the fortnight's vacation, very happily. .

One day George and Mary walked to the grave-yard, in which their little baby-sister was buried. Under a large cedar-tree, they found her grave, and read on the fair white stone the name, 'JANE.' Then they laid some sweet flowers on the grave, and ta-

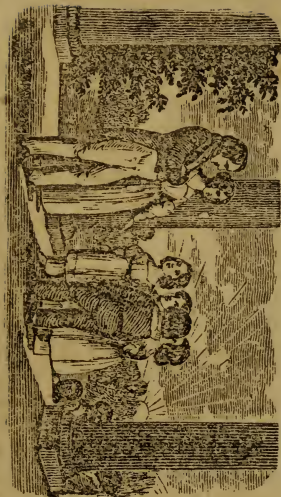


king each other's hands they slowly left the yard, without speaking a word, and walked back to the house quite sad and sorrowful.

Another day, George and James got liberty to take their guns and go on a hunting excursion. After rambling in the woods till they were so tired they could hardly walk, they reached home with but one poor little bird in their game-bag. The girls mourned so much over the dead bird, when they saw it, that the boys promised they would never again be so cruel.

Day after day the cousins found some new pleasure and amusement. The time flew swiftly away, and when Mr.





and Mrs. Somers called the children all out on the piazza, one evening just at sunset, to inform them that they should return home in the morning, the children could hardly believe that they had been together a whole fortnight.

Early in the morning the carriage was at the door; the tears came into the eyes of the cousins as they shook hands, and amid the cries of 'good-bye!' 'good-bye!' the coachman cracked his whip, the horses sprang forward, and the visitors were soon fast leaving the green fields, the tall trees, and the sweet groves of the country, for the dusty, bustling streets of the noisy city.



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